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## ARE PAUL'S PRISON LETTERS FROM EPHESUS?

CLAYTON R. BOWEN

Meadville Theological School, Meadville, Pennsylvania

Among the Pauline letters, Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, and Philippians are on their own showing written from prison. The purpose of this paper is to inquire where, and incidentally when, the imprisonment occurred during which their composition falls. Since "Ephesians" is not regarded by the present writer as from Paul's pen, the inquiry will concern only the other three. In any case, "Ephesians" offers no data for the solution of the problem beyond those already given in Colossians, and offers too many problems of its own to cast light on others.<sup>1</sup> The question where Colossians, Philemon, and Philippians were written is not easy to answer. Contrary to common assumption, they do not themselves give any information on this point. It is generally assumed that they all three come from the same imprisonment; this is pretty certainly the case, as will be indicated below, and in default of evidence to the contrary may be taken for granted.

The last chapter of Colossians indicates that Paul is a prisoner as he writes ([4:3] *δέδεμαι*, [10] *ὁ συναιχμάλωτός μου*, [18] *μνημονεύετε μου τῶν δεσμῶν*), and 1:24 (*χαίρω ἐν τοῖς παθήμασιν κ.τ.λ.*) must have the same reference. So in Philemon ([1 and 9] *δέσμιος*, [10 and 13] *ἐν τοῖς δεσμοῖς*, [23] *ὁ συναιχμάλωτός μου*, and vs. 22 has the same implication). These phrases are all general, and do not indicate anything of the nature or circumstances of the imprisonment, still less of its cause, its date, or its place. Who holds Paul a prisoner, on what charge, for how long, under what conditions, we are not told by so much as a word. Of course the recipients of the letters knew these things. The case is similar with Philippians. The first chapter indicates in four passages that Paul writes from

<sup>1</sup> "Der Epheserbrief kommt in dieser Beziehung nicht in Betracht: er ist so allgemeinen Inhalts dass er überhaupt keine Anhaltspunkte für den Ort seiner Abfassung enthält" (E. Haupt, *Die Gefangenschaftsbriege* [Meyer, 7/8 ed., 1902], Einleitung, p. 71).

captivity ([1:7] ἐν τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου, [13] τοὺς δεσμούς μου φανεροὺς γενέσθαι κ.τ.λ., [14] πεποιθότας τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου, [17] τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου.). The situation is serious (1:30, 2:19, 2:23 f.; 4:14); there is a prospect that the apostle may be put to death (1:20-23; 2:17), and the whole tone of the letter is that of a possible or even probable last farewell. As Bacon felicitously puts it, the writer "is only smiling through his tears,"<sup>1</sup> even in the most hopeful passages. But where and when he found himself in this grave peril is nowhere indicated, not even in the references to the "praetorium" (1:13) and to "Caesar's household" (4:22). These two phrases have been thought to fix Rome beyond peradventure as the place of writing, but this assumption has been shown to lack foundation. "Praetorium" as the name of a place means the headquarters of the *praetor*, the general of the army or the military governor. As a matter of fact, we know of no place or building in Rome so called but do find the term in frequent use for the official residence of the provincial governors, indeed for any fine country house. The gospels (Mark 15:16; Matt. 27:27; John 18:28, 33; 19:9) use the word of Pilate's headquarters in Jerusalem, and Acts 23:35 of Herod's residence in Caesarea, where Paul was actually held prisoner. If *praetorium* is to fix the place of writing Philippians, it speaks for Caesarea. But the term is obviously used in this context, not of a place at all, but of a group of men, the "praetorian guard." While the main body of these picked troops was stationed in Rome, a detachment of them formed the bodyguard of each provincial governor, and we have direct inscriptional evidence, for example, of praetorians at Ephesus.<sup>2</sup> It would be distinctly more feasible for Paul's bonds to become "manifest in Christ throughout the whole praetorian guard" stationed at such a provincial capital as Ephesus, numbering perhaps a couple of hundred men, than among the whole body of praetorians at Rome, numbering some nine or ten thousand. As for "Caesar's household," it means, of course, the entire force of slaves and attendants of every sort, attached in any capacity to the imperial *ménage*, whether at the time resident

<sup>1</sup> B. W. Bacon, *The Making of the New Testament* (1912), pp. 89 f.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the later commentaries *ad loc.* and the material in the appendix to J. T. Wood, *Discoveries at Ephesus* (1877).

in Rome or elsewhere. Such persons, in a foreign city, would naturally come together in some form of association, and again we have, as it happens, inscriptional evidence from Ephesus showing such *collegia libertorum et servorum domini nostri Augusti* existing there.<sup>1</sup>

These two phrases, then, do not speak decisively for Rome, or even fix the balance of probability in its favor. Yet they have had much influence in forming the traditional view that the imprisonment in question was that in Rome, this view further owing much to the fact that Paul's Roman imprisonment was more notable and better known than any other, since it came as the climax of his arduous career and ended with his death. The only other known prison period that can be compared with it in importance is the two-year detention in Caesarea, and the claims of this period have been urged, for part or all of the "prison letters," by a large number of scholars. Most have assigned to Caesarea only Colossians and Philemon, with Ephesians if genuine;<sup>2</sup> a few also place Philippians here.<sup>3</sup> But as between Caesarea and Rome, the balance of probability is very strongly in favor of Rome, as was demonstrated long ago by H. J. Holtzmann, after careful weighing of all the data.<sup>4</sup> And for Rome the majority of students decide.

But it is a mistake to think that we are forced to choose between these two places. Paul had been in prison before the arrest at Jerusalem, which began the four or more years of captivity in Caesarea and Rome. In the "sorrowful letter" to Corinth, written from the arduous mission in Ephesus, he passionately compares himself with the Judaist apostles who are working to discredit him "—with all my labours, *with all my lashes, with all my time in prison*—a record longer far than theirs. I have been often at the point of death" (II Cor. 11:23 [Moffatt's translation]). The Greek

<sup>1</sup> Wood, Appendix No. 20; citations also in Dibelius, *ad loc.*

<sup>2</sup> So Schultz, Schott, Wiggers, Laurent, Reuss, Meyer, B. Weiss, Schenkel, Hilgenfeld, Hausrath, Krenkel, Pfeiderer, Lipsius, Haupt, Feine, Clemen, Sabatier, Rackham, and others. The argument is well put in English by E. L. Hicks, "Did St. Paul Write from Caesarea?" *Interpreter* (April, 1910).

<sup>3</sup> So Thiersch, Böttger, Paulus, Spitta, O. Holtzmann, Macpherson.

<sup>4</sup> Holtzmann, *Kritik der Epheser- und Kolosserbriefe* (1872), pp. 279-84.

here is expressive: ἐν κόποις περισσοτέρως, ἐν φυλακαῖς περισσοτέρως, ἐν πληγαῖς ὑπερβαλλόντως, ἐν θανάτοις πολλάκις. So, a little later, writing the "reconciliation letter" to Corinth from Macedonia, after his departure from Ephesus, he recounts the hardships he has been enduring as a διάκονος θεοῦ: "by great endurance, by suffering, by troubles, by calamities, *by lashes, by imprisonment*; mobbed, toiling, sleepless, starving" (II Cor. 6:4 f. [Moffatt]). A little later still he writes back to Ephesus from Corinth greetings to "Andronicus and Junias my kinsmen and *my fellow-prisoners*" (Rom. 16:7). These are the only definite allusions to imprisonments in Paul's own words, outside the prison letters; it is noteworthy that they are all written during or just after the long and extraordinarily difficult mission in Ephesus, so incompletely recorded in Acts. There is a strong presumption, especially in the allusion to Andronicus and Junias, that one at least of the imprisonments referred to occurred during that Ephesian stay. The catalogue of hardships in II Cor. 6:4 f. is of course a general picture of what Paul endures as a Christian missionary, yet its specific application is not to his present stay in Philippi, where he is visiting briefly among his best-loved friends, but to the preceding period of propaganda work. The immediately preceding time is the three years in Ephesus, and Paul would hardly go back of that for material to describe the conditions under which he is carrying on his work. So II Cor. 11:23 is written from Ephesus and depicts hardships endured in the past and present (cf. vs. 28, "besides those outside matters, there is that which presses upon me daily, anxiety over all the churches"). The indication that suffering, stripes, imprisonment, marked the Ephesian mission is strengthened by reference to I Cor. 15:32: "I fought with beasts at Ephesus," which is almost certainly to be taken literally. So definite and specific a statement has no appearance of a figure of speech and could scarcely have been so understood by any reader. A condemnation *ad bestias* would involve preceding arrest, imprisonment, and doubtless stripes. Still more significant is the scarcely ambiguous language of Rom. 16:3 f.: "Salute Prisca and Aquila, my fellow-workers in Christ Jesus, who for my life laid down their

own neck."<sup>1</sup> This language can scarcely mean anything else than that the apostle had been in danger of execution, but had somehow been saved by Prisca and her husband at the hazard of their own lives. This certainly implies arrest, imprisonment, condemnation, and a hardly bought release, and the almost inevitable locality for the episode is Ephesus, where Prisca and Aquila live, where Paul has just been spending three strenuous years in their company. The reference can hardly go back to the days when they were together in Corinth (Acts 18:1-18); the language is too fresh and vivid for that. The occasion might be the *θηριομαχία* of I Cor. 15:32, as Max Krenkel argues, or some later crisis.

That long stay in Ephesus conceals many tragedies of which the account in Acts gives no notice. We may mention the Galatian tragedy and the Corinthian tragedy with its various correspondence and journeyings. But more especially we recall, besides the *θηριομαχία*, the terrible *θλίψις ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ* of II Cor. 1:8-11, with its burden *καθ' ὑπερβολὴν ὑπὲρ δύναμιν*, with its *ἐξαπορηθῆναι καὶ τοῦ ζῆν*, with its *ἀπόκριμα τοῦ θανάτου*, with its unexpected divine rescue (*ἐρύσατο*) *ἐκ τηλικούτου θανάτου*, which the grateful Paul can compare only to an *ἔγερσις τῶν νεκρῶν*. This very powerful language is not wholly transparent, but it clearly posits some experience in Ephesus like arrest, imprisonment, condemnation to death, unexpected deliverance at the last moment; it fits admirably the suggestion concerning Prisca and Aquila in Rom. 16:3 f. Of this *θλίψις* there is no account in any other letter, nor does Acts mention it; obviously the Acts narrative must be greatly supplemented. All the language of II Corinthians, chapters 1-9, is colored by this terrible experience. The emotion and gratitude of the "reconciliation letter" are not due exclusively to the good news that the Corinthians have come to their senses. The *γάρ* with which 1:8 begins indicates that verses 3-7 have in mind the same experience. How moving is their language! Paul is still trembling under the shock of the danger so narrowly escaped. *παράκλησις*, "comfort," occurs ten times in these verses, *παθήματα*, three times, *θλίψις*, twice, and *θλίβω*, once, *οἰκτιρμός* and *σωτηρία* and *ὑπομονή* and *πάσχω*, each once.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. an interesting parallel to this phrase in an inscription from Herculaneum, cited by A. Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East* (Eng. tr., 1910), p. 120.

Something terrible had befallen Paul in Asia; he had been facing death, not from sickness, not from accident, but from the hostility of men, in short, after imprisonment and the prospect of execution. Further words of this letter (4:7-18) are very graphic; they describe Paul's experience in Ephesus. Again the heaping up of danger and opposition until every earthly hope of escape seems gone, and the almost miraculous deliverance by the power of God (4:7b = 1:9b, the same situation is in mind), *θλιβόμενοι, ἀπορούμενοι, διωκόμενοι, κατα βαλλόμενοι*, always bearing about in the body the *νέκρωσις* of Jesus, always delivered *εἰς θάνατον*, the outward man decaying, enduring the *παραντίκα ἐλαφρόν τῆς θλίψεως*—all this sketches a picture which surely includes imprisonment and such a situation as that out of which Philippians, for example, is written; so in 5:1-9, a passage whose eschatological expression has always been likened to that of Phil. 1:23. Paul has been facing the dissolution of his earthly house and the transition to the house not made with hands, longing (as in Phil. 1:23, to depart and be with Christ) to be clothed upon with the heavenly habitation, to be at home with the Lord, contemplating the judgment seat of Christ. Then the magnificent *apologia* of II Cor. 6:4-10: “. . . in endurance, afflictions, necessities, distresses, *stripes, prisons*, riots, toils, sleepless nights and hungry days . . . through dishonor and evil report, as impostors and unknown, dying (and lo! we live), beaten, put to grief, beggars, penniless.” Is not this precisely such a situation (*ἀνάγκαι, στενοχωρίαι, κόποι, νηστεῖαι, πτωχοί, μηδὲν ἔχοντες*) as that to which the Philippians ministered with their gift, and out of which the Philippian letter was written? Is not 6:9 f. the exact equivalent of Phil. 4:11-13, *μηδὲν ἔχοντες καὶ πάντα κατέχοντες* another phrasing of *ἐν παντὶ καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν μεμύημαι καὶ χορτάζεσθαι καὶ πεινᾶν καὶ περισσεύειν καὶ ὑστερεῖσθαι*? In 7:4 f. the *θλίψις* is carried over from Ephesus even into Macedonia; still no relief for the flesh, still *ἐν παντὶ θλιβόμενοι*, still *ἔξωθεν μάχαι, ἔσωθεν φόβοι*, not all due to the exigencies of the Corinthian situation. II Cor. 8:1-5 is grateful testimony to the generosity of the churches of Macedonia; is it far-fetched to see in this warm praise some reaction on benefits to Paul personally, as well as on contributions to the collection? Cannot verse 2 be equated with Phil. 4:10b? Of

course the *prime* reference is to the collection, including contributions from Thessalonica and Berea (Acts 20:4) as well as from Philippi. But may not the special warmth of this acknowledgment, unparalleled in any similar references, be due to Paul's grateful memory of their goodness to him not long before? The collection is being raised in Philippi, apparently, at the time this "reconciliation letter" is written.

It seems, then, very clear from II Corinthians, chapters 1-9, that a period of *θλίψις*, including imprisonment and the prospect of death, had been undergone by Paul while still in Ephesus. It was *such* a situation as that out of which Philippians was written, that during which the Philippians won Paul's gratitude by *συνκοινωνήσαντές μου τῇ θλίψει* (Phil. 4:14). Colossians and Philemon might come from an earlier stage of the same period, since they are commonly supposed to come from earlier in the same imprisonment from whose later stages Philippians is written. The "sorrowful letter" (II Cor., chaps. 10-13) was written from Ephesus during the troubled time, though apparently not during a period of imprisonment, as there is no indication of such in the extant text, and Paul is contemplating a visit to Corinth (12:14, 20 f.; 13:1 f., 10). But chapter 11 castigates precisely the same Judaistic teachers as does Phil. 3:2-5, 18 f. (cf. 11:18, *καυχῶνται κατὰ σάρκα*, with Phil. 3:3 f., and 11:21b-23a with Phil. 3:4b-5, *ὑπερ ἐγὼ* with *ἐγὼ μᾶλλον*). And II Cor. 11:23-28 vividly pictures such experiences of hardship as belong to Paul's life as a missionary, some of which characterize the Ephesian period and form the background for such a letter as Philippians. Similar experiences are cited in 12:10, "weaknesses, injuries, necessities, persecutions, distresses." I Corinthians and Galatians are written shortly before the *θλίψις*, from Ephesus; they reveal many of the elements which appear in the prison letters and offer many parallels of phraseology. Romans, written not long after the Ephesian *θλίψις*, has likewise many parallels of thought and expression, the most notable, however, being in chapter 16.

The passage II Tim. 4:16-18 seems to be a bit of genuine historic material (whether written by Paul or not) and may perhaps refer to the same imprisonment as that of Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon. The whole passage 4:9-18 (or even vss. 9-22, though



vs. 20 is a little awkward) might, on this view, have been written at about the same time as the "reconciliation letter" (II Cor., chaps. 1-9), and from the same place, Philippi, perhaps to Timothy at Ephesus. The cloak might have been left with Carpus at Troas on the way from Ephesus to Macedonia (II Cor. 2:12). Alexander the coppersmith may be the cryptic Ephesian Alexander of Acts 19:33. Verses 16-18 may refer more explicitly than II Cor. 1:8-11 to the *θλῖψις* in Ephesus; "no one took my part, but all forsook me" equates well with Phil. 2:21, "all seek their own," and the suggestions of Phil. 1:15-17. Erastus may have remained at Corinth, his home (Rom. 16:23), after completing the trip to Macedonia begun in Acts 19:22 in company with that Timothy to whom this information is now supposedly being given. Erastus is still in Corinth when Romans, chapter 16, is written. If Paul went directly from Ephesus to Troas he would hardly touch Miletus, and so could not leave Trophimus of Ephesus (Acts 21:29) behind at Miletus sick. But if from Ephesus the party made a hurried trip to Colossae (Philem. vs. 22?), they might have come back to the coast at Miletus, and so to Troas and Philippi. This datum, however, is difficult. "Come before winter" would be meant, on this hypothesis, to bring Timothy from Ephesus to Corinth, where Paul had planned to spend the winter after his departure from Ephesus, and actually did so (I Cor. 16:6; Acts 20:3, 6). Both Timothy and Trophimus would seem to have joined Paul in Corinth, for both are found in his company when he leaves Corinth for the last journey to Jerusalem (Acts 20:4). Of the ten persons in Paul's company in the prison letters (Timothy, Epaphroditus, Epaphras, Onesimus, Aristarchus, Jesus Justus, Tychicus, Luke, Mark, Demas) the last four appear in II Tim. 4:10-12 in notices which form very natural sequence to those of the prison letters. Mark, for example, who in Col. 4:10 was going on a mission in Asia Minor, is now to be brought back thence. The sending of Tychicus to Ephesus is natural; his home was there and he is being used just at this time (Col. 4:7) as a messenger. He has carried the letter to Colossae, and is now off on another mission. Demas is named in Col. 4:14 and Philem., vs. 24, among the *συνεργοί*, but with no such commendatory word as all the others receive.

Demas has forsaken Paul, having loved the present age. It must be kept in mind that any assignment to definite situations of the probable or possible genuine Pauline passages in the Pastorals is extremely precarious; yet whatever be the origin of II Tim. 4:9 ff., it is at least possible that the traditional opinion which makes verses 16 f. refer to the same imprisonment as that of Philippians is correct and that the imprisonment took place at Ephesus.

There are a few extra-canonical indications of an Ephesian imprisonment. Clement of Rome (5:6) says of Paul, *ἐπτάκις δέσμα φορέσας*, on which Funk remarks, "Fortasse Clemens vocem *ἐπτάκις* sensu vocis *πολλάκις* usurpavit." Probably, but the word does not go beyond Paul's *περισσοτέρως* in II Cor. 11:23. The second-century *Περιοδοὶ Παύλου* seems to have contained an account of an imprisonment and *θηριομαχία* of Paul in Ephesus, probably based on I Cor. 15:32, or at least related to it. Hippolytus, in his commentary on Daniel, written in the earliest years of the third century, remarks (iii. 29 [4th ed.; Bonwetsch, 176]): "If we believe that when Paul was condemned to the wild beasts, the lion that was loosed upon him lay down at his feet and licked him, why should we not also believe what happened in the case of Daniel?" The fourteenth-century church historian Nicephorus Callisti has the tale in full, taken from older sources now lost, though probably not from the *Περιοδοί*, perhaps not from the *Acta Pauli*, which are the ultimate sources. "They who described *τὰς Παύλου περιόδους* related also very many other things which he suffered and at the same time accomplished, both now and at the time when he was present in Ephesus. Nicephorus goes on to tell how Jerome the *ἄρχων* in Ephesus threw Paul into prison and condemned him to the lions. In the night Eubula and Artemilla, wives of prominent Ephesians, come to him seeking baptism. They are all miraculously transported to the seashore, where Paul baptizes the women, returning then to his prison. Exposed to the lions, no one of them will touch him. A miraculous hailstorm kills many of the spectators and beasts. Jerome, hit by a hailstone, is converted and baptized. The lion that was especially sent against Paul runs away to the mountains, and Paul departs to Macedonia and Greece,

thence to Troas, Miletus, and Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup> The Acts of Paul and Thecla tell of a somewhat similar happening in Iconium, and other parts of the extant *Acta Pauli* have imprisonments in Sidon, in a mine, in Philippi, in Rome. It is clear that second-century tradition spoke of repeated imprisonments of Paul, and located one of them in Ephesus, although this may be no more than an explication of I Cor. 15:32.

A further second-century witness to the tradition of an Ephesian imprisonment is found in the so-called "Monarchian" prologues to the epistles of Paul, apparently of Marcionite origin. The prologue to Colossians contains this phrase, "Apostolus *jam ligatus* scribit eis *ab Epheso*," which is a clear statement that Colossians was written from Ephesus while Paul was a prisoner. Corssen supposes the writer to mean that Paul was carried from Caesarea to Rome via Ephesus, but this seems very unlikely.<sup>2</sup> In fact, we have here explicit evidence of second-century belief that Paul had been in prison in Ephesus and there had written at least one of the prison letters, and that from circles specially concerned with the apostle and his works. It is perhaps worth mention that among the ruins of Ephesus is shown a building called, apparently as far back as can be traced, "the prison of Paul."<sup>3</sup> This implies an ancient local tradition, to which, of course, not much importance can be attached, but which may add some slight weight to other indications of the same sort.

So far, then, we have evidence that Paul was several times imprisoned (II Cor. 6:5; 11:23; II Tim. 4:16-18; Clement of Rome; *Acta Pauli*), and that in particular there was in Ephesus an experience of *θλίψις*, including imprisonment and danger of death (Rom. 16:3 f., 7; II Cor., chaps. 1-9; Monarchian Prologue to Colossians; local Ephesian tradition), an experience which would

<sup>1</sup> Nicephorus, *Church Hist.*, II, 25, *ap.* Migne: P.G. CXLV, cols. 821-24. The passage is reprinted in Carl Schmidt, *Acta Pauli* (1904), pp. 111 f., and is given in English translation by B. Pick, *Apocryphal Acts* (1909), pp. 2 f. Robinson, Bacon, and Maurice Jones write as if this episode were a part of the extant acts of Paul and Thecla.

<sup>2</sup> P. Corssen, in *ZNTW*, X (1909), 38, 44; cf. Bacon, in *Expositor* (August, 1915), pp. 241 f.

<sup>3</sup> A cut of this is given at the head of Martin Dibelius' "Commentary on Ephesians," *Handbuch zum N.T.*, III, Part II (1911), 95.

furnish the appropriate background for the prison letters, one of which is definitely stated (Monarchian Prologue to Colossians) to have been written from Ephesus by the apostle as a prisoner. This evidence is, to be sure, of different degrees of value; taken as a whole it deserves reflective consideration.

There is further internal evidence to be cited. At the time Paul made the journey to Jerusalem which ended in his arrest, he was definitely through with missionary work in the east. He had made all his plans to carry out his long-cherished hope of seeing Rome and using Rome as headquarters and basis to evangelize Spain and the west. This plan he states with so much definiteness and finality to the Romans (1:10-15; 15:19-29) that we may be sure it was no purpose of the moment to be easily abandoned. He is conscious of having "fully preached the gospel of Christ from Jerusalem and round about even unto Illyricum," always taking virgin territory that he might not build upon another man's foundation, and "now having no more any place in these regions" of the east. Acts 19:21 expresses the same purpose, and in Acts 20:25-32, in words taken from the "we" source, Paul says a sad and solemn farewell to his chief church in Asia Minor, the church where he labored longer than anywhere else in the whole east. He assures them that they shall see his face no more; he is taking his final leave of them. If Ephesus is not to see him again, we may be sure that no church in Asia or the east generally is again to be visited. To be sure, Paul was not permitted to go on at once from Jerusalem to Rome; he went to Rome only after two years and more, as a prisoner who had appealed to Caesar. Yet we should suppose that his purpose would still be the same. Surely, during those endless two years in Caesarea, he had been fretting his heart out because he was held back from that long-desired work in the west. Surely it is most unlikely that from Rome, the very headquarters he had chosen for his western mission, he would go back to that territory which he had earlier "fully covered," where there was "no longer any place" for him. The whole purpose of his rapid evangelization of the province of the empire is to reach the whole *orbis terrarum* as completely as possible before the parousia; he is debtor to the world. Every passing year makes the time shorter and his task more urgent.

That is all the more reason why, after enforced idleness of several years, he should immediately, in case of release, hasten to the unevangelized western field. It would be most astonishing under these circumstances if he should think only of going back to the old churches of his earlier foundations, to Asia and Macedonia and Achaia, where many other teachers were now at work, harrowing again well-tilled soil. The prison letters take for granted that as a matter of course, if he is released, the apostle will turn at once to Asia and Macedonia. Phil. 1:24-27 has in mind a continuation of missionary work in the east, not simply a visit to Philippi. Paul is not to "hear of their state" when "absent" in Spain. There is no explanation, no hint of a changed purpose, not even any suggestion of a long journey undertaken for the express purpose of reaching these places, still less of an unexpected revisiting of places to which he thought he had bidden farewell forever. Rather, the expectation of visiting Colossae (Philem., vs. 22) and Philippi (Phil. 1:24-27; 2:24) is expressed as something simple and natural, as if these places were near the place of imprisonment and to them the apostle would be coming, in the natural course of events, as soon as set free. Especially is this true of the words to Philemon: "Prepare me a lodging, for I hope that through your prayers I shall be granted unto you." One has the impression that Colossae is nearer the place of writing than is Philippi, for the expectation of coming to Philippi is not spoken with such definiteness—"whether I come and see you or be absent, I may hear of your state." This exactly fits the hypothesis that the letters are written from Ephesus. What would be more natural than that, on being released from arrest in Ephesus, Paul should run over to see the new churches in the Lycus Valley, of whose founding prospects he had just been hearing from his friend Epaphras, where he had a hospitable friend Philemon, who had apparently invited him to come and whose reception of Onesimus the apostle was anxious to see for himself? It was a short journey, easily made. What, on the other hand, is more unnatural than that Paul, set free in Rome, should give up his Spanish plans and say lightly to a friend in a church of another man's founding, in the heart of Asia Minor, 1,200 miles away, "Get ready the guest-room"?

But, further, the plans indicated in the prison letters *correspond exactly* with Paul's movements when he left Ephesus. Acts 19:21 states Paul's purpose, during the latter part of his stay in Ephesus, of going from there to Macedonia and Achaia, i.e., to Philippi and Corinth. In Acts 20:1 f. this purpose is carried out. The statement is very concise; Paul's own words in II Cor. 2:12 f.; 7:5 corroborate it in detail. There is in neither source any indication whether he carried out the projected visit to Philemon at Colossae; in any case this would not take much time, and owing to his anxiety to get the news from Corinth he would not linger there, but turn back to Troas. A week would cover a journey from Ephesus to Troas via Colossae, with a brief visit in the latter place. Such a journey might very easily include touching at Miletus (as already suggested above), thus accounting for the statement in II Tim. 4:20 that Trophimus was left at Miletus ill. All this is, to be sure, hypothetical. Paul's plan of visiting Macedonia, specifically Philippi, after leaving Ephesus, is stated not only in Acts 19:21 but by the apostle himself in I Cor. 16:5; II Cor. 1:16; since Phil. 1:25-27; 2:24 states the same plan, and Acts 20:1 f.; II Cor. 2:12 f.; 7:5 state that it was carried out, there is a strong presumption that Philippians (as well as Colossians) dates from the Ephesian period.

Some light may be thrown on the matter by examining the list of friends named as being with Paul when the prison letters are written. Philippians names only two, Timothy and Epaphroditus (1:1; 2:19-29). Timothy is also named in Colossians and Philemon, as are Epaphras, Tychicus, Onesimus, Aristarchus, Luke, Mark, Jesus Justus, and Demas. All these nine names occur in both letters, save that Tychicus<sup>1</sup> and Jesus Justus fail in Philemon, verse 12.

Epaphroditus of Philippi (who is *not* the same as Epaphras of Colossae) is named only in Philippians. He could, of course, have come from Philippi to any town where Paul was imprisoned. But

<sup>1</sup> Tychicus could of course greet Philemon in person at Colossae. It has been suggested (by Zahn, *Introduction to N.T.* [Eng. tr.], I [1909], 451, and Amling in *ZNTW*, X [1909], 261 f.; cf. also Dibelius, *ad loc.*) that in Philem., vs. 23, the phrase ἐν Χρ̄ῳ Ἰοῦ was originally a reference, or contained a reference to Jesus Justus.

it is vastly easier and more natural for him to come to Ephesus than to Rome. The preceding gifts of the Philippians had been sent short distances, to Thessalonica (Phil. 4:16) and to Corinth (II Cor. 11:9), whence they might easily hear of the apostle's distress and speedily relieve it. Philippi is 600 miles air-line from Rome. By the travel route of that day it was about 830 miles: 370 from Philippi to Dyracchium (Durazzo) over the Via Egnatia, 100 across the Adriatic from Dyracchium to Brundisium, and 360 from Brundisium to Rome. Lightfoot, whose figures these are, calculates that the journey would take a month.<sup>1</sup> There is a great deal of traveling back and forth for places 800 miles or a month's journey apart. First the Philippians get word of Paul's situation in some detail, and in particular of his need. This must be through a messenger. Is it really plausible that in Rome, surrounded by a large church to which he had recently written the Epistle to the Romans (Rom. 12:13, "communicating to the necessities of the saints"!), where he had had means enough at his disposal to hire a house for two years, the apostle fell into such dire need that it could not be relieved there, but is heard of and after some delay relieved by a church 800 miles away? If Paul had been in real destitution, he would have perished before the Philippian help could have reached him! "The very grave turn for the worse" in Paul's affairs in Rome, universally assumed to account for Philippians, not only lacks the slightest evidence, but is of all things in the world most unlikely. The difficulty is increased by the fact that after the Philippians knew of his need, and had taken thought for it, they were unable for a time, through some limitation (*ἡκαυρέισθη* [4:10]), to send relief. As soon as circumstances permitted, they dispatched the gift, by the hand of Epaphroditus (Phil. 4:18; 2:26), who remained with Paul as "fellow-worker and fellow-soldier" (2:25) until he fell sick. News of his illness is carried back to Philippi (2:26), causing anxiety there. Report of this anxiety is brought back to the sick man, which, in turn, worries him (2:26). Thus there are four journeys between the place of Paul's

<sup>1</sup> Lightfoot, *Philippians*, p. 38, n. 1. Ramsay (article "Roads and Travel in the New Testament" in the extra volume of Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*) counts 381 miles from Dyracchium to Philippi, which would make 841 from Philippi to Rome.

confinement and Philippi.<sup>1</sup> Paul decides to send Epaphroditus back home, since he is homesick, and though Epaphroditus is apparently a convalescent he starts off for Philippi, carrying the letter. All this is absolutely natural and intelligible if Paul was in prison at some place like Ephesus, from which Philippi could be reached in a few days, but very improbable if the two places are from 800 to 900 miles apart. Epaphroditus witnesses for Ephesus.

Timothy joins with Paul in the salutation of all three letters. Paul expects to send him after Epaphroditus to Philippi "very soon" (*ταχέως* [2:19]), and expects him to come straightway back again, "that I may be of good comfort when I know your state." And Paul hopes himself to be able to come "very soon" (*ταχέως* [2:24]), but apparently only after Timothy's return from Philippi. All this *ταχέως* language and program is very difficult to conceive between Rome and Philippi, Timothy making a round trip of nearly 1,700 miles, absent some two months, while Paul, acquitted, awaits in Rome his return, and yet himself to come "very soon" whither Timothy is gone! From Ephesus across to Philippi is a journey which fits these data perfectly; it is the journey which Paul actually made after leaving Ephesus (Acts 20:1) and which Timothy had made shortly before (Acts 19:22, a verse which is surely out of its proper connection, and belongs after the events of vss. 23-41). Not only was Timothy in Ephesus with Paul, and sent from Ephesus to Philippi, but he had earlier been sent from Ephesus to Corinth (I Cor. 4:17) and was expected back in Ephesus (I Cor. 16:10 f.). When Paul goes to Philippi, Timothy is with him there and joins in the salutation of the "reconciliation letter" to Corinth (II Cor. 1:1). Clearly, then, he was in Ephesus with Paul at the time required by our hypothesis. He has further associations with Ephesus: in Rom. 16:21, the following winter, he sends greetings back to Ephesus; I Tim. 1:3 associates him with that city; and II Tim. 1:15-18; 4:19 places him there. Timothy witnesses for Ephesus.

<sup>1</sup> Lightfoot (*Philippians*, p. 37) tries to eliminate two of these. He assumes that Aristarchus parted with Paul at Myra (Acts 27:5 f.) and went at once to Philippi with the news that Paul was being carried to Rome. The Philippians thereupon sent off Epaphroditus with the gift, which thus arrived in Rome about as soon as did Paul, who had been delayed by shipwreck. Further, Epaphroditus' anxiety is due to the fact that he knows the people at home will worry when they hear of his illness; there has been no report that they are worrying. This is violence to Paul's words.



Epaphras, a Colossian, is with Paul (Col. 1:7 f.; 4:12), called in Philem., vs. 23a, "fellow-prisoner" (συναιχμάλωτος); the word is used of Aristarchus in Col. 4:10 and of Andronicus and Junias in Rom. 16:7, and quite certainly means that Epaphras was actually under arrest (αἰχμάλωτος is quite literally "captive," or "prisoner of war"). In Acts 19:29 there is a significant statement of something that happened in *Ephesus* at just the time of Paul's difficulties there—"having seized (συναρπάσαντες) Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians, Paul's συνέκδημοι." Epaphras of Colossae was also Paul's συνέκδημος and might naturally be arrested later on, if Paul himself was. It is far more natural that Epaphras should have come from Colossae to Ephesus, the metropolis of Asia, some 170 miles away, than that he should have come all the way to Rome, some 1,200 miles. There is no particular reason why in Rome, at this date, peaceable Christian friends of Paul like Aristarchus and Epaphras should be put under arrest. The picture of Acts 28:16-31 has certainly no such suggestion, nor is there any indication anywhere that would make such a procedure plausible. It is too often forgotten that Paul was not himself in Rome as a prisoner of the Roman government; he is there in custody, awaiting the issue of his own voluntary appeal to Caesar. But Rome had never arrested him as an offender, never charged him with any crime, nor even made any complaint against him. In Jerusalem a Roman officer had saved him from being lynched by a Jewish mob, and in order to save his life had kept him under guard for a time. The indifference and cupidity of Felix prolonged Paul's detention intolerably until, tired of waiting, he made his appeal for imperial decision, only to hear the judgment, coming with fine irony, too late: "This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Caesar"! It is repeatedly insisted in Acts that Rome had no charges to make against Paul; in the strict sense he was not a Roman prisoner, for Rome had never actually put him under arrest (cf. Acts 25:25, 27; 26:31). The conditions under which he was taken to Rome (Acts 27:1-3) and settled there (28:16, 30 f.) do not make it plausible that a friend who came to visit him would be forthwith arrested. But Acts, chapter 19, describes most circumstantially a situation in *Ephesus* under which

companions of Paul might be and *actually were* arrested for no reason save their connection with him, specific mention being made of Aristarchus, Epaphras' mate as "fellow-prisoner" of Paul in the prison letters. The whole Epaphras episode irresistibly suggests Ephesus. Who was this man and why had he come to Paul? He was apparently a convert of Paul's during the apostle's Ephesian mission. Having himself received the gospel, he becomes one of Paul's helpers who were evangelizing the whole province of Asia (Acts 19:10, 22, 26; I Cor. 16:19; II Cor. 1:8; Rom. 16:5), while Paul was for the most part working in the city itself. Apparently Epaphras carries the gospel to his home town of Colossae and to the neighboring churches of the Lycus Valley, a πιστὸς διάκονος τοῦ Χριστοῦ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, as Paul calls him (Col. 1:7), i.e., Paul's representative or proxy in this region. Epaphras has returned to Paul, whom he finds under an arrest which he himself is soon forced to share. He brings news of his work, of the churches which he has founded, and of their growth and development (Col. 1:4); he brings also their greetings and good wishes (1:8). Forced by arrest to remain, he is ἀγωνιζόμενος over his newly founded churches, that they may develop as they ought (4:12 f.); if he had been free he obviously would not have prolonged his absence. All the language of the letter indicates that Paul has for the first time heard of the founding of these churches; it is his immediate reaction to the news. He introduces himself to the Colossian Christians as one who, a stranger to them, is just cultivating their acquaintance (1:23b—2:5). He has just written a similar note to the church in the more important neighboring town of Laodicea (4:16). The phrasing of Col. 1:7 f. implies that no long interval separates the ἐμάθετε and the καὶ δηλώσας. The whole language of the letter implies that the churches are new, that Epaphras has just reported his own recent work. All the references to his work (particularly that in 1:7 f.) are absolutely incompatible with the supposition that the events in question lie five or six years back, whether known or unknown to Paul in the interim. All the moral counsels of the letter, beginning with 1:10, detailed in 3:12—4:6, especially the somewhat formal outline of Christian conduct in the domestic relationships, are such as fit an infant community, just learning to

live worthily of the gospel. The injunctions of Col. 3:5 f. posit a new group, the object of much curious questioning from pagan neighbors and friends. Anyone who will read the letter from this point of view, noting especially the language of Col. 1:4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 21 f. (ποτέ . . . νυνὶ δέ), 23; 2:1 f., 5, 6, 7; 3:7 f. (ποτέ . . . νυνὶ δέ), 9 f. (ἀπεκδυσάμενοι . . . ἐνδυσάμενοι), cannot escape the impression that a new church is addressed. Practically every one of the verses just cited contains a direct allusion to the Colossians' conversion; all this is the language of fresh and vivid reaction upon that happy event, not references back to it years later. Every reader of Colossians would have this impression if his mind were not dominated by the traditional notion that the letter was written from Rome at the end of Paul's life. Epaphras witnesses for Ephesus.

Aristarchus is with Paul (Col. 4:10; Philem., vs. 24) as συναϊχ-μάλωτος. We have already seen that this word quite certainly means a real prisoner, and that Aristarchus was actually arrested in Ephesus at precisely the time required by this hypothesis (Acts 19:29). On the other hand, we do not at all know that he was in Rome when Paul was. The spring after the Ephesian θλίψις he was in Philippi with Paul, and went with him to Jerusalem as a delegate of his home church at Thessalonica (Acts 20:4-6). He sailed with Paul from Caesarea (Acts 27:2) on a boat that was bound for "places on the coast of Asia"; there is no indication that he was a prisoner, or that he went farther than Myra (27:5) with Paul, who was transshipped there. Indeed, the indication is that he did not, since his presence is so specifically mentioned before Myra, but is never alluded to afterward, in the very full and detailed "we-narrative" of the rest of the journey. Aristarchus was probably going home to Thessalonica. This is argued even by Lightfoot, who thinks the letters were written from Rome and must therefore bring Aristarchus later from Thessalonica to join Paul in Rome.<sup>1</sup> Aristarchus witnesses for Ephesus.

Tychicus (Col. 4:7) was with Paul and goes to Colossae with the letter. All that we know of him is that his home was in Asia, i.e., obviously in Ephesus, as he is grouped with Trophimus of

<sup>1</sup> Lightfoot, *Philippians*, p. 35.

Asia (Acts 20:4), who is an Ephesian (21:29). "Asia" in Acts 20:4 clearly means Ephesus, as it does, for example, in 19:22. The only other references to Tychicus are II Tim. 4:12 ("Tychicus I sent to Ephesus"), Eph. 6:21 (a repetition of Col. 4:7), and Titus 3:12 (which adds nothing). But, as an Ephesian, Tychicus witnesses for Ephesus.

Onesimus, Philemon's runaway slave, was with Paul (Col. 4:9; Philem., vs. 24). Of him Paul says (Philem., vs. 10): "I begat him in my bonds," which may be merely chronological ("I converted him since my arrest") or may perhaps more probably imply that Onesimus had himself been under arrest in the same prison with Paul; meeting the apostle under these circumstances, the slave had been won for Christ. If this be the fact it speaks decisively for Ephesus, for the conditions of Paul's detention in Rome were not such that a vagabond like a runaway slave who had been taken up by the police would be put to share his quarters. At least during the earlier part of this period Paul was living in his own hired house. But the whole Onesimus episode speaks for Ephesus. It is doubtless true that the dregs of humanity *Romam sicuti in sentinam confluerant*, but Rome was not the only great city of the ancient world of which this was true, as it is equally true today of Paris, London, and New York. It is true of the metropolis of any country; it was assuredly true of Ephesus. It is doubtless possible that the fleeing slave, especially if he had robbed his master (Philem., vs. 18?), might make the long and expensive journey of 1,200 miles by land and sea to Rome, risking capture by the Roman *fugitivarii*, who lay in wait to arrest such runaways and hand them over to a terrible fate. It is possible; but is it probable that he would pass by Ephesus, the metropolis of his own country, 170 miles away, easily and quickly reached? "Where would a poor slave get the money to make this journey, which today would perhaps be paralleled if a boy from a St. Louis family ran away to London or Paris? And how would Paul get the means to send him such a long journey back? . . . Ephesus, on the other hand, would be a most natural destination for the escaping slave. He would make for the nearest town. . . . Onesimus' horizon would not be large. He would want to go far,

but Ephesus, of which he must have known and heard not a little, would surely be his limit. He could go the whole distance on foot. He would not need to beat the expense or risk the exposure of embarking on board a ship. He would have been more or less familiar by hearsay with Ephesus, the greatest city of Asia, while none of his fellows are likely ever to have been in Rome."<sup>1</sup> It would be a six weeks' journey from Rome to Colossae. Yet Paul, though a prisoner, not knowing how his appeal is to result, expects to hear how Onesimus is received by Philemon: "Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord! Refresh my heart in Christ!" (vs. 20). He promises to repay any charges the slave may have incurred by his flight. However unlikely it may be that Philemon would send Paul any such bill, or that Paul expected him to do so, yet it is hardly probable that Paul would have so written if by the very situation he might not live to keep his pledged word, "I will repay it," indeed, might never hear again from Colossae, but die ignorant of the result of his daring experiment in sending the fugitive back to his master. He could not hear for three months at least, and what, in Rome, might not happen in three months! Psychologically, Rome is improbable as the place from which Colossians and Philemon are written. Before taking such a chance, would not Paul more naturally have written to Philemon of Onesimus' conversion, asking whether he would receive him back as "more than a slave, a brother beloved"? The great question might even rise whether the market value of the ἀχρηστος and ill-named Onesimus was such as to make it profitable to send him back 1,200 miles, a journey involving considerable expense. From every point of view, Onesimus witnesses for Ephesus.

Luke was with Paul (Col. 4:14; Philem., vs. 24). Of him almost nothing is known. But he was in all probability the writer of the "we-passages" in Acts, and therefore pretty certainly with Paul in Ephesus, for Acts 19:23-41 is so circumstantial as to bear every evidence of being taken from that source. The spring following the Ephesian θλίψις he was in Philippi with Paul (Acts 20:5), but there is no reason to believe him stationary in Philippi, since the "we" was dropped in 16:17. There is an old tradition that he

<sup>1</sup> Robinson, p. 184.

died and was buried in Ephesus, and his ruined tomb is shown there. On the whole, Luke witnesses for Ephesus.

Mark was with Paul (Col. 4:10; Philem., vs. 24). He did much traveling about, and was last seen going with Barnabas to Cyprus (Acts 15:39). He is starting off on a trip to central Asia Minor, specifically to Colossae. He seems to have been known in Asia (I Pet. 5:13), and in II Tim. 4:11 he is supposed to be in or near Ephesus. The tradition that associates him with Rome in his later days is probably correct, but it has no certain basis in these prison letters, and only an uncertain one in I Pet. 5:13. That he was in Rome *with Paul* is nowhere stated; Mark's evidence, very slight at best, favors Ephesus.

Of Demas and Jesus Justus (Col. 4:11, 14; Philem., vs. 24) nothing can be said, save that Demas is mentioned in a letter supposed to be sent to Ephesus (II Tim. 4:10). In default of any information about them, we could locate them equally well in Rome or Ephesus. Thus, of the ten companions of Paul named in these letters, four (Timothy, Aristarchus, Tychicus, Luke) seem quite certainly to have been in Ephesus with Paul, three (Epaphroditus, Epaphras, Onesimus) could have been there much easier than in Rome, the other three could have been there as easily as in Rome, while for no one of the ten is there *any evidence* (save inference from these letters) *that he was in Rome*, at least in Paul's time.

Psychologically, all three letters are much more intelligible if sent from Ephesus. They have an air of nearness and intimacy which is unlikely from 800 or 1,200 miles away. It is not so natural that Paul should write to churches in the east which he had never seen, like Laodicea and Colossae, from that distance. Language like that of Col. 1:3 f., 9, 24; 2:1 f., 5; 4:3 f., 7-9, is too intimate for so great a distance. These are not letters which will be six weeks in reaching their recipients. On Col. 4:13 Dibelius comments: "Wer sich die Situation vergegenwärtigt, wird nach diesem Vers unwillkürlich dazu neigen, den Abfassungsort des Briefes in der Nähe von Kol. zu setzen, also nach Ephesus . . . oder Cäsarea." Col. 2:1 expresses Paul's anxiety for those churches "that have not seen my face in the flesh." Written from Rome, this would mean all the churches of the world, not of his foundation; written from

Ephesus, it means those Asian churches which grew out of the work of his helpers during his Ephesian mission (Acts 19:10), two of which are here specified, which makes the remark perfectly natural and congruous. The letters all show too much knowledge of the situation in the churches addressed and presuppose too much knowledge by the churches of Paul's circumstances, as well as too much intercourse, to be written from so distant a place as Rome. Phil. 1:12-14 indicates that the Philippians knew about Paul's general situation (*τὰ κατ'ἐμέ*) and were concerned for the issue. Paul assures them that, contrary to their expectation (*μᾶλλον*), the issue has been favorable to the cause. Paul knows about details in Philippi, for example, the quarreling women (4:2). Phil. 2:19 must be written to a place that can be quickly reached. The message that Timothy is to bear to Philippi is likely to be the news that Paul is sentenced to death (2:17); under such circumstances would he send Timothy off 800 and more miles, on a journey which would keep him absent two months, "that I may be of good comfort when I know your state"? It would be most unlikely that Timothy's return would find him alive, to be cheered by any good news from Philippi. To be sure Paul is here too "smiling through his tears"; that he might live to welcome Timothy back is but a hope, yet if he were sentenced to die, Timothy would assuredly not go off on a two months' trip until all was over.

In Col. 1:24 Paul speaks of his *παθήματα*, not hitherto alluded to, as something already known to his readers; he does not explain the circumstances, just because they are already known. The reference is probably primarily to his imprisonment, but this is first mentioned in 4:3 ("for which I am also in bonds"), then in 4:10 ("Aristarchus my fellow-prisoner"), and finally in 4:18 ("Remember my bonds"). No one of these three references states the fact of his imprisonment as a matter of information, but all allude to it as to something already familiar, just as Philem., vss. 1, 9, 10, 13, 22, 23, assume that Philemon knows all about the circumstances. *Παθήματα*, however, is a strong word to be used for imprisonment alone; it connotes such *θλίψις* as Paul endured in Ephesus, to which we find direct reference in Gal. 6:17, the *στίγματα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῷ σώματί μου*, which come from the *πληγαί, φύλακαι* of II Cor. 6:5,

perhaps also from the *θηριομαχέω* of I Cor. 15:32. These are the most probable antecedents of the "sufferings" of Col. 1:24. In II Cor. 1:5-7 Paul uses this very word *παθήματα* thrice of those Ephesian experiences whose shadow falls so dark across all the joy of the "reconciliation letter." Col. 1:24-29 connects Paul's present sufferings directly with his missionary preaching. This might of course be said of his imprisonment in Rome, since his original arrest in Jerusalem, three or four years earlier, had been the outcome of his work as a Christian apostle. But it could be said with very much more truth and meaning of an imprisonment in Ephesus, after an arrest on the charge of "persuading and turning away much people" from the official cults of that city, an arrest growing out of the protest of the silversmiths and the riot that followed (Acts, chap. 19). Written from Rome, the words are a bit rhetorical; vss. 28 f. are rather the utterance of a man who has very recently been actively preaching and is now in duress as a direct and immediate result—"for which I am also in bonds" (4:3). Col. 4:8 gives a very specific statement of the purpose of sending Tychicus to Colossae. His carrying of the letter and his conveying of Onesimus are secondary; because he is going to Colossae he is given the letter to carry and Onesimus is sent in his company. Tychicus is sent "for this very purpose, that ye may know our state, and that he may comfort your hearts." The purpose is a worthy one, and would explain the sending out of a messenger from Ephesus to an Asian town a couple of hundred miles away; it is certainly far less likely that a man would be sent 1,200 miles to a strange church at so critical a time on so general an errand.

The reference to Mark in Col. 4:10 deserves another word. He is going on a mission to the churches of central Asia Minor and is likely to come also to Colossae. It is much more likely that Paul would send such a messenger to the Asian churches from Ephesus, while he was still in that city at the head of the Asiatic mission, than that he should do so four or five years later from so distant a point as Rome, after he had practically severed his connection with the eastern churches. Paul knows that instructions have already been given at Colossae (by Epaphras?) concerning Mark and the purpose of his visit, to which instructions the apostle



here adds the support of his word of commendation. Since Mark is with Paul and Epaphras (or someone else) has notified the Colossians of his intended coming, Paul and Mark are probably fairly near Colossae, not 1,200 miles away at Rome, with no intercourse with that place save by a six weeks' journey of a special courier. There has been much speculation as to Mark's errand. We have no data for answering the question, but it has been conjectured that he was engaged in raising a collection.<sup>1</sup> This is possible; the language would fit this situation (cf. II Cor. 8:23 f.), and if it should be the correct explanation it would speak decisively for Ephesus as the place of writing. For it was in the Ephesian period that Paul was engaged in raising the collection for Jerusalem through his deputies (such as Titus in Cor.), and it has notable mention in the letters of that time. We know that the church in Philippi responded nobly to the collection and won Paul's enthusiastic praise, spoken of at length in II Cor. 8:1-5 (cf. also 9:1-5), written from Philippi. If Philippians was written from Rome, i.e., later than the date of II Corinthians, chapters 1-9, it is rather strange that Paul makes no allusion to this earlier generosity of theirs, especially since he is specifically writing about their raising of money (Phil. 4:10-18). Further, since the Ephesian days, Paul had been twice in Philippi, once at least for a visit of some length (Acts 20:1-6), yet the letter has no hint of any visit save when he founded the church. If the letter comes from Ephesus, collection and visits are still in the future. It has been objected that if the letter came from Ephesus it would take up the matter of the collection in Philippi, at which Paul was just then working, as the letters to Corinth do.<sup>2</sup> But the collection is unmentioned in Galatians, which comes from the same period, though we know that contributions were made in Galatia (I Cor. 16:1). The orders about the collection, both to Galatia and Philippi, had obviously been given prior to the extant letters to those churches, which have their special occasions.

<sup>1</sup> H. Ewald, *Die Sendschreiben d. Ap. Paulus* (1857), p. 466; Holtzmann, *Kritik der Eph.- und Kol.-briefe* (1872), p. 283 ("vielleicht"); Klöpper, *ad loc.*, "vielleicht eine neue Kollekte," but not probable.

<sup>2</sup> Maurice Jones, *Commentary on Philippians*, Intro., p. xxxiv.

(To be concluded)